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MARTLET

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BUNNIES FOR DINNER

PAGE FIVE

Electric cars
page three

Something without explosions
page six

Editorial

Lies, all lies

Otto von Bismarck once said, "people never lie so much as after a hunt, during a war, or before an election."

Regardless of how the federal election turns out, we're not going to see the government the candidates have promised. And Canadians know it, because we don't trust our elected officials.

A recent Sun Media poll reveals that 76 per cent of Canadians think politicians are liars who won't keep their election promises. As a London Free Press columnist joked, "The big news is that 19 per cent of voters still believe them."

This month's election has been riddled with nasty ad campaigns, impossible promises, and unfounded accusations on all sides. As usual, sorting the truths from the lies is more trouble than it's worth.

The Conservatives want major tax cuts and increased health and military spending, while the Liberals are staying away from tax cuts and promising investments in cities, daycares, and seniors' benefits. The NDP wants to bolster social programs and improve the environment, and the Bloc is just looking to make Quebec a bigger player on the national stage.

Oh, and then there's the Green Party, who ... well, it's hard to know what the Green Party wants as it's rarely, if ever, mentioned in the national media (aside from a flurry of pot-related jokes by journalists). The Greens were even excluded from the recent debates.

Every party has its promises, and in politics the old adage that "promises are made to be broken" rings especially true.

Case in point: Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty explicitly promised to not raise taxes during his campaign last fall. Fast forward to last month, when the newly elected Liberal brought in a 'health premium' (i.e. tax hike) that will cost the average taxpayer between $300 and $900 more each year. That's no way to instill voter confidence.

Over ten years ago Martin and the Liberal team promised to abolish the GST, yet we're still paying that nagging seven per cent on most purchases. Likewise, Brian Mulroney once said, "the issue of free trade affects Canadian sovereignty and we will have none of it." A few years down the road, he was instrumental in the development of NAFTA.

Closer to home, Premier Gordon Campbell's government put several key components of BC Hydro up for sale a couple of years back, after promising to keep it public during his campaign. The official line is that "core assets" are still public.

To most, a promise is sacred. To politicians, though, it's easy to utter the usual excuse: "Things have changed."

Regardless of what happens in the election, voters shouldn't expect to get whatever it is that they voted for, because hey, things change. It's cynical as hell, but in today's political landscape that's the only way to be.

Editorial topics are decided on at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

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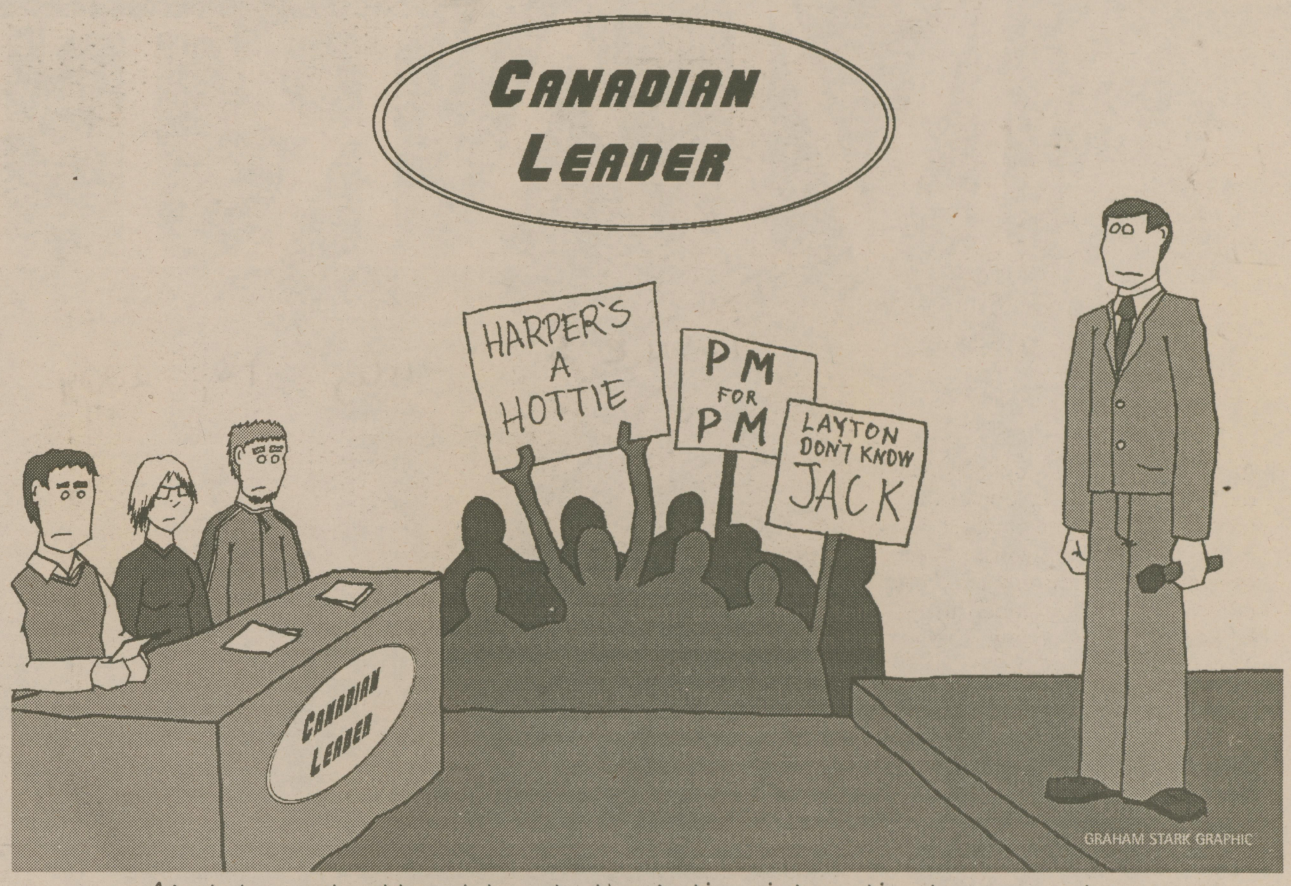

A last desperate attempt to make the elections interesting to young voters.

Canadian politics or blood sport

by Tim Hanson

If the media reports are an indication of what we can expect from the next federal election, then it will probably look more like a WWE Battle Royale than an exercise in Canadian democracy.

Despite the media circus, I think that the upcoming election results are going to be the most interesting ones we've seen in a long time.

In one corner we have the Liberals, the scandalized and somewhat fiscally responsible government. Despite the shadow of Jean Chrétien and his haunting hold over budgets to come, Paul Martin has, in my mind, done a good job of changing the perception of the Liberals from the governing party to Paul Martin's party. With his attempts to get to the bottom of scandals, institute protection for whistleblowers and basically quell the idea that another Liberal government will simply be four more years of western alienation, Paul Martin has definitely put a positive spin on the Liberals. His Achilles heel is that in his attempt to balance the budget, lower the national debt and curb the deficit, he is indirectly responsible for putting Canadian health care in the state it is now. Although a bit dangerous, he does represent the most sensible choice among the candidates.

Conservatives say that if you want flash and pizzazz then you've come to the wrong party. Stephen Harper seems to be emblematic of this description in every interview he has. His one stumbling point is his largest: the Conservative party. In the last year, this party has been dashed on the rocks at one moment and then basking in the sun during the next. It hasn't helped that the former parties that merged were basically lost causes on the desert of Canadian politics. After the accumulated fiascos of Stockwell Day, it was obvious that their leadership change was needed in order for the party to go anywhere. What the party needs right now is what Stephen Harper has been trying to provide: a stable history. Although the right has been united, there is still the lingering fear that the Conservatives are too wishy-washy, chameleon-esque and inexperienced to effectively govern Canada. They seem to have a good mandate and strong right wing support, but their obstacle to obtaining enough seats to govern is their lack of experience.

I will definitely credit the revitalization of the New Democrat Party to Jack Layton. The man has taken a party from relative obscurity and cast them into a new light of intelligent and competitive contention. His viewpoints are always strong and he always has his own unique perspective on an issue, which always comes back to his platform of equality. A platform that, granted, most Canadians have lost sight of in the last eight years. I have often worried that health care concerns will trump our education system and fiscal responsibility, but Layton seems to be the only candidate who attempts to balance all three concerns nicely.

One common gripe amongst Canadians is that we have too little choice; we need more parties representing our interests or that our options are limited to the devil we know or the one we don't. With nothing being taken for granted in the upcoming election, and our choices being what they are, it will be interesting to see just how the dust settles and how our new country takes shape.

Missile Defense dysfunctional family

by Angela Anderson

In Canada's ongoing attempts to relate with the United States, our neighbour takes on the role of cool older brother while we are relegated (or, more aptly, relegate ourselves) to the role of younger sibling. We hate them sometimes because they are mean to us, but we still follow them around. They call us names and slam their bedroom door in our face, but we want to wear the same clothes, and we would so love to play with them and their toys, if only they would think we were cool, too. And they even have the super-mega-great new Ballistic Missile Defense kit, now with extra paranoia power!

So what is a little ol' "peacekeeping nation" like Canada to do? We've still got a role in NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command, formed during the Cold War in 1958). But some people think we, as a country, should participate in a "new and improved" Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) plan. Those people should remember that missile defense is only fun until someone loses an eye.

Two years ago, the United States decided to end their 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with Russia. This was a sort of follow-up to the revelation in 1999, in the National Missile Defence Act, that a new U.S. missile defense system would be set up when the technology was ready.

Canada and the United States share (ostensibly). They have in common things like a border and trade, and, according to Ottawa's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website, "have for generations cooperated on the joint defence of the continent to our mutual benefit." So, the U.S. wants Canadians to join in the brouhaha of the BMD sibling playdate. They are doling out intelligence that reveals that, although there is no perceived threat to Canada at this time, there could damn well be one in the future. So there.

Several political parties are hoping to earn Canada the secret password to the keenest, swellest American tree house club ever, and a little taste of anti-missile pie, by agreeing to support amendments to the NORAD rulebook. In June of 2003, Bloc and NDP MPs and Liberal backbenchers were absolutely opposed. Then pre-prime ministerial Paul Martin abstained (always good not to have an opinion when trying to get ahead in politics) and David Anderson (who has set his missile-defense-loving foot on our campus many times) said yes. This February, a motion by the Bloc to refuse Canadian participation in U.S. BMD talks was voted down 155-71.

The U.S. intends to deploy its new system in the autumn of 2004. That should make it a hot topic for campaigners hoping to get elected on June 28. Yet, a thorough look at the web material posted by the main parties avoids the topic altogether. Younger siblings are often known for keeping quiet and letting other family members speak for them. But with the idea that radar stations and launchers could be based in Canada and weaponry (or, er, anti-weaponry) could again be planned for staging in space as part of the programme (which, incidentally, has a $9 billion U.S. development budget for this year alone), Canada and Canadians should say something.

If you would like more information on this important issue, the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (www.vipirg.ca) has launched Students Against Missile Defence (they're like a cool older cousin).

UVic honours 80 years of service

by Andrew Cienski

At the age of 101, Percy Wilkinson received an honorary doctorate of Laws for outstanding public service at the University of Victoria's Spring Convocation. With only five years of formal education under his belt he taught himself enough to work 21 years as a teacher, 20 years in the legislature with the Ministry of Education, and serve his country as an air force officer in WWII.

"I don't see any reason they should think [my career] was anything special," he said, "though I am flattered."

Other recipients included a United Nations special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, a retired Supreme Court of Canada Justice, and Kwaguilth artist Richard Hunt.

Wilkinson said he has led his life according to a simple ethic of always striving to do the best job he could, regardless of the limited resources at his disposal. As a boy he was taught at home "when other things weren't too pressing."

Shortly after his father went to fight in the First World War, Wilkinson's family left their farm in East Saanich and moved to Oak Bay. He was enrolled in school then, but after only two years, at 15, he went to work as a harvester until the end of the war. At 18, when the returning soldiers flooded the workforce, he finished high school and did a year at Victoria's Provincial Normal School for Teachers. At the time the school consisted of a single building: the distinctive Young Building of what is now Camosun College.

In the 20s there were only about 900 schools in BC, and applications consisted of writing a letter to one of these "whistle stops along the CP rail line."

Wilkinson said he loved learning as much as teaching, and taught himself math and science so that he could pass the knowledge on to his students.

Despite the changes in how teachers are taught, Wilkinson has found little change in children's education over the years. The biggest change he notices is in the sizes of classrooms and schools, and consequently in the sense of community.

"In the country schools," he said, "there was no electricity or water, but all the parents knew each other." He said those were his favourite teaching experiences.

His commitment to his students and Boy Scouts has resulted in hundreds of people whose lives he has affected. If there was nothing else he passed on, there was the lesson of taking pride in one's work and doing the best job possible.

Wilkinson also volunteered as a Scout leader for 80 years, and to commemorate that dedication a medal was minted in his honour in 2002.

NIC HUME PHOTO

Dr. Kim Kerns avoids high summer gas prices with her eco-friendly 1993 electric Geo Metro.

Green transport pot-pourri

by Mike Berry

For Dr. Kim Kerns, the delight in reading zero cents per litre and being emissions free is no longer wishful thinking. Since 1999 she has been driving her electric car to campus on a daily basis.

"As a commuter car it's amazing," she said of the 1993 Geo Metro. In 1999 she bought the already converted car from Canadian Electric Vehicles in Lantzville for $12,000. A regular conversion kit for the Geo starts at $9,000 from the same company.

The professor of psychology has never had to worry about fluctuating gas prices or oil changes. The car doesn't have an exhaust system and no engine means fewer moving parts. Brake pads are the only major mechanical repair, she says, and a $40 electrical bill over the eight month school year is hardly noticeable. The car has a top speed of around 120 km/h.

Upon arriving on campus after the 33 km trek from Sooke, Dr. Kerns has a special parking spot in lot D behind the Elliot Building, where there is a connection to recharge her 12 batteries. The drive uses around 60 per cent of the battery and takes around three hours to fully charge. The 120-volt charger is also compatible with any outlet from home.

An average battery lasts around five years according to Dr. Kerns and costs about $2,000 to replace. But she still feels environmentally sound since 98 per cent of the battery is recyclable.

In light of recent events regarding hydrogen and fuel cell research at UVic, she said that she is happy these new technologies are advancing, but is disheartened to see that others are not taking advantage of alternatives that are readily available.

Dr. Kerns explained that for faculty, staff, or students living in the city or any area closer to campus than Sooke, an electric car could only work to one's advantage.

They wouldn't have to recharge as often as she and would save plenty of money. She also has a "normal" car, one with an internal combustion engine, which she says she fills about once a month. It can be used for longer commutes.

"Though people are more than happy to advocate eco-friendly transportation, modern society is not willing to sacrifice flexibility or convenience," explained Dr. Ned Djilali, director of UVic's Institute for Energy Systems (EISVic).

EISVic has been working on a solution to the emission problems from these "normal" cars since 1989. In recent months it has received prestigious honours at home and abroad.

"Hydrogen fuel cell technology is ready," Dr. Djilali said. "What is required is funding for infrastructure."

Hydrogen-fuelled transportation generates up to 95 per cent fewer greenhouse gases. A recent award-winning hydrogen fuelling station design from UVic would only require four minutes to fill and could conceivably be built by 2006. The government plans on showcasing this technology at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Sarah Webb, interim sustainability coordinator with facilities management, helped organize the recent bike-to-work week and condones a reduction in the use of cars altogether.

"These technologies do not solve other automobile issues such as urban sprawl, lack of true cost accounting, and car-oriented development," she explained.

Pictures of Dr. Kim Kerns' car and info on conversions can be found at www.haritech.com/CEV.html.

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Refunds: Every UVIC student is a member of VIPIRG and pays a membership due through their student fees. Undergrads pay $3 per full time semester or $1.50 per part time semester. Grad students pay $2 per semester. This fee is refundable by cheque to students during a refund period each semester.

The **Summer 2004 semester refund period** will be held **Monday, June 28, 2004–Friday, July 9, 2004.** Refund forms can be picked up at the VIPIRG offices in SUB B120-122. info: 472-4558. Forms will be posted outside the office for convenience of students coming after office hours.

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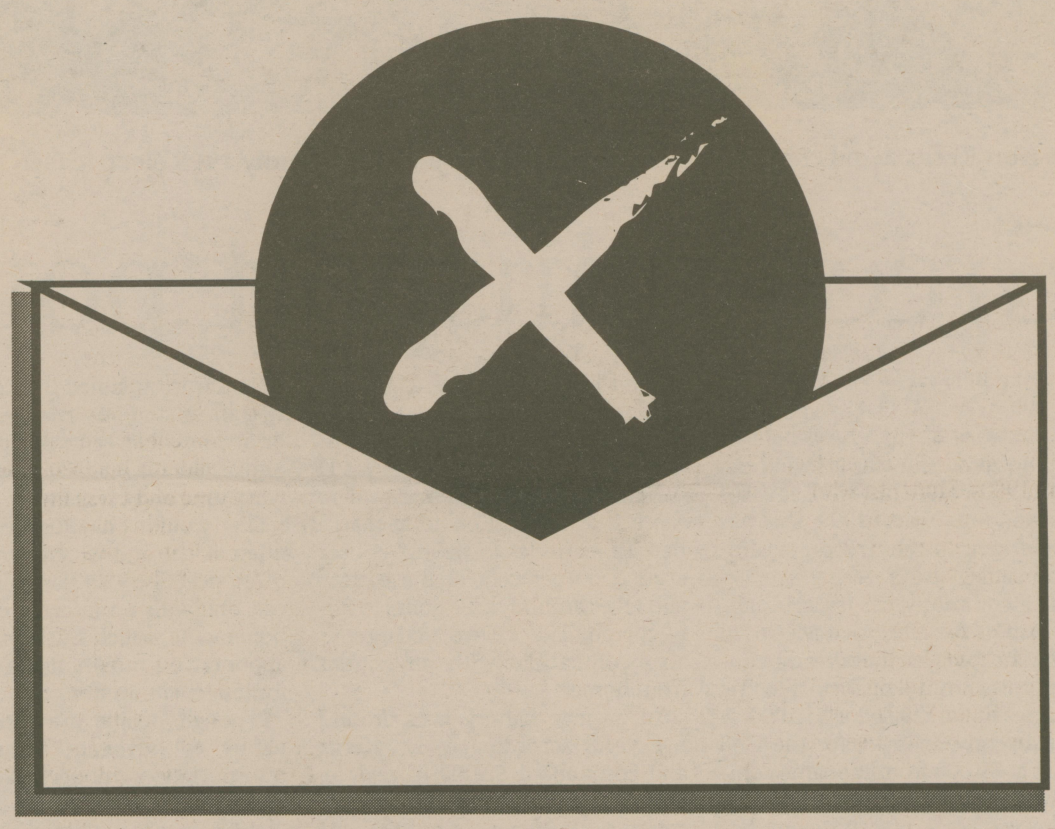

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BUNNIES FOR DINNER

One student's adorable fur-ball is another's source of protein

by John Thompson

Rabbits are everywhere at the University of Victoria, crawling through bushes, scampering across lawns and even finding their way on to the dinner plates of a few students.

Hundreds, if not thousands of the European (or table) rabbit have inhabited the lush garden campus since the early 1980s. Students, who probably first introduced the animals by releasing unwanted pets, are commonly seen today fawning over the critters and feeding them carrots.

When Stu Crawford arrived on campus two years ago, his reaction was different. The 25-year-old ethnobiology graduate student was raised on a ranch in Lethbridge, Alberta, where his parents gave him a few rabbits to raise when he was about nine.

Females can bear up to four litters a year and have eight teats to feed them with. The offspring in turn can reproduce within four months. So it wasn't long before Crawford had hundreds of rabbits. At about $2.50 a pound, breeding them was a pretty good way to make money.

When he first saw the abundance of rabbits on campus, he says his thoughts turned to capturing some.

"It makes perfect sense. They waste all that money watering the lawn," he said. "I've slaughtered thousands. They look like food to me."

His roommates agreed. All are former vegetarians who shun eating meat from factory farms where animals spend their lives in cramped cages and pens. In comparison, the rabbits frolicking at UVic have had a pretty good life, said Graeme Verhulst, a 21-year-old political science student.

"I think eating local is a lot more important than eating vegetarian," he said. "I'm happy to eat ethically raised meat."

He added that rabbits are an invasive species not native to the area.

"You have broom pulls and ivy pulls, so why not a rabbit pull?" he said, referring to Scotch broom and ivy, two invasive plants that choke out indigenous species unless locals uproot them every year.

They first attempted to capture rabbits under the cover of darkness during the second week of April. They tried to chase and capture the usually docile animals but were unable to outrun them.

"They were way faster than we were," said Stefan Schmitt, 28-year-old physics graduate who also lived with the other two. Eventually they called the night a failure and switched tactics.

Days later Crawford and Verhulst returned, this time in broad daylight with a truck that

DAN HARDER PHOTOS

carried a cage in the back, used for ducks they kept on their property. Walking around campus with backpacks, they lured the animals with an apple core. When rabbits hopped near, they dropped them in the backpack. They left with three.

Verhulst says a few people saw them catch the critters, but everyone seemed curious, rather than angry or upset.

The rabbits spent the next few days inside a large wire enclosure, about two metres tall and four and a half metres wide, built for the ducks from driftwood and abandoned construction materials. Then the time came for Crawford to show his roommates how to properly snap the rabbits' necks, bleed and skin them. He says in a world of mass consumerism, capturing and killing an animal takes the mystery out of where your food comes from.

"There's nothing more connecting than something giving up its life for you," he said. "It gives you more respect than you had before."

He says he's worried that students who've drunk a few pitchers at the campus pub may want to repeat the act, and he cautions that that capturing and killing rabbits needs to be done properly.

"It can be quite painful for the animal," he said. "If you just bonk them on the head, it's going to be a mess."

"It's traumatic all around when it's not done right," he said, adding that if someone he doesn't know wants to learn, he'd be happy to teach them.

Schmitt says he became nervous as he watched others kill the rabbits, but "as soon as I had my hands on the rabbit, the moment seized me and I was fine."

"If I'm going to eat meat, I should be able to kill an animal," he added.

The rabbits were then stuffed with breadcrumbs, slathered with rosemary and oil and roasted before being served at a potluck attended by about 20 people, held as a going-away bash before the student tenants moved away for the summer.

Verhulst says the meat tasted a bit dry, but afterwards they made a stew that was "quite tasty."

"The closest thing that it tastes like is chicken. I don't know what else to describe it to," he said.

Crawford disagreed. "I've lived on rabbit. To me, chicken tastes like greasy rabbit," he said.

The three were concerned that pesticides sprayed on campus might affect the food, so they didn't eat the animals' livers.

"I was worried if they'd be carcinogenic," Schmitt said. "But I figured, 'whatever.' Once in a while probably isn't that harmful. It's probably better than farmed salmon."

Crawford added he noticed swollen adrenal glands in all three and was curious what could have caused it.

Tony James, the university grounds manager, says there isn't any doubt that some of the rabbits are diseased. The university doesn't condone anyone catching and killing the animals, but he adds that under the Wildlife Act, rabbits are considered undesirable, along with pigeons and starlings. This means if they're caught, you aren't allowed to release them.

"If you catch them . . . you're supposed to humanely euthanize them," he said.

James says he's heard of students catching the rabbits to eat before, but added that others catch them and take them home as pets.

He's also quick to refute rumours that the university culls its rabbit population.

"Every time someone finds a dead rabbit, they say I've poisoned them," he said, adding that the rabbit population continues to grow, but is kept in check by hawks, owls and dogs.

Ken Marrison, assistant director of campus security, said the university has no specific policy dealing with students capturing rabbits, but "we'd not allow people to come up here and do that."

"Obviously, the university is not here for people to catch wild beasts to butcher," he said. "We're not the hunting grounds for the public."

Teeth the size of mini vans

Roar: Lions of the Kalahari showing at IMAX

by Angela Andersen

As the map-like view of Africa surges in IMAX headiness towards the Kalahari Desert of Botswana, the scene reveals the tracks of animals leading to a watering hole like roads to Rome. Hooves, paws and feet have made these patterns in the yielding, dry soil, demonstrating the importance of the small water supply ... and the power of the predators that have control over all who come to drink there. These are the lions of *Roar: Lions of the Kalahari.*

On the sublimely gargantuan screen, the arrogant eyes of lions are a cinematic subject on their own. Drops of blood glint like massive rubies, suspended from the coarse fur around the satiated lion's lips. Incisors are projected to the size of mini vans ... and the lions' testicles look pretty big too.

Captured in large-format, 70mm film by Tim Liversedge and Richard Jones, *Roar* allows us to view life at the watering hole without obstacles. The open landscape of the Kalahari is filled with a few deep-rooted trees, scant brush and stunted grasses. This means that there is rarely any place for a 10-foot lion, or its prey, to hide. The thought that comes to mind, then, is where are the cinematographers hiding? The answer seems to be that they didn't hide at all. They came to know their subjects and the terrain so well that they simply became another part of the environment. Liversedge says, in fact, that the hunting lions used him and his camera as cover to hide behind to try and get closer to their prey.

Documentary aficionados who keep their friends up-to-date on spider facts and general elephant knowledge will leave the theatre with little to tell about lions, because this exceptional film is not really a documentary. It is a drama; a feline mini-saga; a Lion Dynasty. The animals that orbit the Kalahari watering hole are a cast of characters—the skittish and delicate springboks; the sniggering, restless zebras, the no-nonsense elephants, the lion king and his two concubines.

PROVIDED PHOTO

The lion king challenges Sir Elton John in the African night.

When they cut to meerkats surveying the desert, it seems that a jaunty tune by Sir Elton John might break out. Instead, the narrator takes over. And this is the main downfall of the film. The animals that live and die during the course of *Roar* are dignified, stunning and captivating without the incessant narrative chatter to point this out. The editing has also worked towards this goal of classic narrative, which reaches its dénouement before the 40 minutes of IMAX-time is up. It is incongruous to present the existence of these lions as a tidy morsel when life on the Kalahari is a continuing cycle of harsh dry seasons, rains, births and deaths. It is even more incongruous that the cinematographers, who worked so hard to become so much a part of the world they were filming that they achieved invisibility, are subsumed by heavy-handed post-production.

That said, this is a beautiful film, with some of the best cinematography and sound recording I have ever experienced, in any genre. I have already returned to watch *Roar* again, for two reasons: the tracking shot that follows the slow, muscular dance of a powerful, female lion skimming the ground as she approaches the target of her patient hunting; and the roar of two male lions, challenging each other in the African night.

Roar: Lions of the Kalahari *is currently at the National Geographic Theatre, Royal British Columbia Museum.*

Finally, something without explosions

by Briony Smith

The summer is often a bleak wasteland for film fans, littered as it is with bloated CGI-fests and merch-heavy monstrosities. But cinema-savvy Canadians can rejoice at a bright spot in the previously unredeemable summer movie season (*Garfield*, anyone?) as one of our own trundles out *Seducing Dr. Lewis* just in time to provide salvation for any movie buff.

In a season usually free of subtleties, director Jean-François Pouliot delivers a small film that is deft and blithe in its comedy, but also functions as a portrait of the tenacity and lovability of the human animal. The animals in question are the grizzled inhabitants of St. Marie-La-Mauderne, a teeny-tiny town on an island in Quebec that is bereft of the fish that provided a livelihood for the men and their families—eight years ago. The members of the town subsist on their measly welfare allotments, each small packet of money drilling away at their self-worth. This may sound like a rather depressing set-up, but this film is thrumming with joy.

The seduction of the title is not sexual in nature, but in fact concerns the plan of town mastermind and salty father figure Germain (Raymond Bouchard). When St. Marie-La-Mauderne is in the running for a factory to be built on their land, the town is thrown into a panic when it turns out that to secure the factory—which would provide jobs for everyone—they need to have a doctor living in their town...permanently. Through a clever and very amusing twist of fate, Dr. Lewis (David Boutin) lands in St. Marie-La-Mauderne, ripe for Germain's charms and crazy plotting to convince him to stay.

The villagers tap his phone and use every bit of acquired knowledge to make St. Marie-La-Mauderne seem like the best place on earth. For example, it is discovered that Dr. Lewis lost his father—so Germain takes him fishing. When Dr. Lewis can't catch a fish, Germain has a diver attach a fish to his line—but it's frozen. Germain's ability to explain anything away to the oblivious doctor provides the heart of this very funny film.

The charm of *Seducing Dr. Lewis* lies in the delicate way the comedy reveals itself, skipping merrily from one rollicking gag to the next; the wit of the screenplay and the delight in seeing what Germain comes up with next had the audience laughing out loud and clapping the entire way through.

This film is a great pleasure to watch, and is masterful in how it manages to revolve around mannerism and plotting, yet remains surprising and hilarious. *Seducing Dr. Lewis* shows human beings at their canny yet vulnerable best. This movie may not be highbrow, but it will make you laugh, and will make you feel proud to share the country with characters as sublimely human as those in this wonderful film.

Celebrate Canadian film by seeing Seducing Dr. Lewis *(*La Grande Seduction*) on Canada Day at Cinecenta. Also playing on July 2 and 3.*

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Shrek 2 rivals original

Charismatic characters of *Shrek 2* entertaining and memorable, despite film's weak plot

by Darrell Andersen

PROVIDED IMAGE

A sassy Antonio Banderas is the highlight of *Shrek* sequel.

While the first *Shrek* movie kept up a good pace from beginning to end, *Shrek 2* takes a good while to get up to speed and eats away at the movie's already short running time of 93 minutes. Returning from a somewhat peaceful honeymoon, Shrek (Mike Myers) learns that his biggest challenge yet is that he will have to meet the parents of his wife Princess Fiona (Cameron Diaz) in the Kingdom of Far Far Away. As Shrek, Fiona and Donkey (Eddie Murphy) journey day and night to the distant land, King Harold (John Cleese) and Queen Lillian (Julie Andrews) await the return of their daughter and her "Prince Charming." They, of course, don't expect her to come back as an ogre.

Where the *Shrek* movies really shine, the second even more than the first, is with their humorous banter and well-voiced characters. Perhaps it can mostly be attributed to snappy writing and Murphy's comedic talents, but Shrek and Donkey are still a laugh-out-loud funny and unpredictable comic duo. Many old characters make their return in *Shrek 2* and there are plenty of flamboyant new ones, most notably the swashbuckling, ogre-killing Puss In Boots (Antonio Banderas), who is a lot like Zorro with whiskers. Boots steals a lot of the best one-liners in the movie. He saved *Shrek 2*—each of his scenes is a laugh riot.

The visual quality of *Shrek 2* shows a marked advance in CGI technology since the first film, especially with the backgrounds and the lead characters. The greater level of detail and expression adds to each character's believability.

The pop culture references come one after another throughout the whole film. From television to pop icons and even some current movie references, there are so many that I'll have to see it again to catch the ones I missed. Product placements are subtle but still noticeable as the whole kingdom of Far Far Away is basically the fairy tale version of Hollywood, complete with the obligatory Hollywood type sign and taking every opportunity to mock North American consumerism.

Even though *Shrek 2* was not as good all around as *Shrek*, fans of the first will still love the sequel, and the new characters add something special that will make this movie a big success. Creating a good sequel to any popular movie is not easy, especially when the expectations are high. While *Shrek 2* has difficulty getting the ball rolling it makes up for it with a very funny and satisfying ending, great characters and some great laughs.

Fresh-popped goodness

James Murdoch
Between the Lines
Indica Records

by Ami Dagan

Don't be fooled by the album cover —James Murdoch may look like boy band material, but on disc he's got good guitar and good vocals, which generally means good pop. The young Canadian from Whitehorse delivers a cheery, catchy and upbeat sound that resembles John Mayer's style. *Between the Lines* is certainly worth a listen.

Murdoch's first independent album, *Polyphonic*, was nominated for pop album of the year at the 2002 Prairie Music Awards. Talent, hard work and good timing helped this singer/songwriter along the way.

"I was in the right place at the right time," says James about getting noticed. Performing an unscheduled afternoon gig in a Toronto hotel lobby surrounded by an audience of five or six was all it took. Late for a meeting, an Indica Records representative scurried up an escalator, but didn't miss the band playing. By the time James got back home, he received an invitation to strike a deal.

The perks came when Indica backed him up. Strumming in LA, Pixies guitarist Joey Santiago lends his pick for two songs on the album: "I Was There" and "Don't Call."

Potential is laser inscribed on this disc. James' melodies are mature and acoustically appeasing, though his lyrics reflect his youth.

"I Was There," a fast paced tune, deserves some attention, but the "woo-who-who vocals" after the chorus threw me off – particularly when he sings about being "there" in a thoughtless romance. Maybe I missed something between the lines.

The first track, "Believe," might be your typical radio material, but the rest of the album delivers fresh pop goodness. Right from the get go, "Can't Deny" surges a snappy chorus, mellows down a moment, and then gives you a whirl. James gets a little funky singing "City's On Fire," and the pace slows down a bit for "@Vancouver."

Anyone who appreciates pop should keep an ear out for James Murdoch; his future sounds good. *Check him out at Steamer's Pub on Wednesday, June 23.*

Stepford revisited

by Stephanie Bowen

Stepford is an upper-middle class white suburban fantasy: a gated community of solid real estate ventures, nuclear families, perky housewives and the men who bring home their bacon. But below the surface of this ode to 50s culture, oddly preserved in Connecticut, lurks… well, very little, actually.

Opening in theatres last weekend, Frank Oz's remake of *The Stepford Wives* diverts from its original thriller/horror genre, attempting instead a stab at humour. Following an untimely dismissal from the network she runs and a subsequent nervous breakdown, Joanna Eberhart (a shorn and surefooted Nicole Kidman) and her husband flee New York City. Suburbia, they feel, will right what is wrong with their marriage and their lives.

Of course, they are sorely mistaken.

Overrun with pastels, short men in glasses and an eerie onslaught of blonde, the little town proves surreal. In no time Joanna and her trusty sidekick, Bobbie Markowe (played with surprising finesse by Bette Midler), discover that something is seriously off-kilter.

Unfortunately, it takes the audience far less time to see through Stepford.

A remake is predictable by nature. When reconstructing a classic tale, there is no element of surprise; directors work from the knowledge that their plot has already been digested by most who will view their rehashing. In this respect, there is room to manoeuvre, as does Oz, into other genres, new characterization, even new conflicts. Whereas the Joanna and Bobbie of the 1975 version were 'women's libbers' and mostly stay-at-home moms, the modern day characters are successful career women: Joanna runs a television network, Bobbie writes best-selling novels.

The Stepford husbands, too, are a far cry from their earlier counterparts: once slyly powerful and conniving, Oz constructs them as silly, snivelling and desperately attempting to reclaim a dated concept of masculinity. The Stepford Men's Association lacks only the NO GIRLS ALLOWED! sign above its door, as inside the men play video games, fight robot wars, and plot to take over the world (insert evil laughter here).

The problem with reducing a story such as *The Stepford Wives* to a contemporary farce is that to do so trivializes any message its original may have had. Stepford and its wives were horrific to the 1975 audience because they represented the two biggest fears of the women's liberation movement: housewives and male backlash.

In a hilarious parody of reality TV, the modern rendition does go as far as to tackle the current post-war-of-the-sexes climate (i.e. power-hungry wives and emasculated husbands), but the result is laughable. As the new Stepford wives exercise like washing machines and practice Christmas carols while wearing reindeer antlers in July, I had the sinking suspicion that a series of cheap shots were being taken at the original.

The fear of being forced into the role of a 50s housewife may seem ridiculous today, but at the time it was foremost on the feminist agenda. As my mother, peer to the original Stepford Wives, explained, "That was what scared us. The idea that men would suddenly say 'We've had enough,' and everything would return to imbalance and inequality. *The Stepford Wives* was just an extreme of that."

And now, it's just extremely silly.

There's nothing that says that eerie can't be funny, and a situation in which wives are replaced with robots is ripe for black humour. Unfortunately, the comedy employed in this new version of *The Stepford Wives*, indeed the very film itself, mimics its subject a little too closely: poorly constructed and empty-headed.

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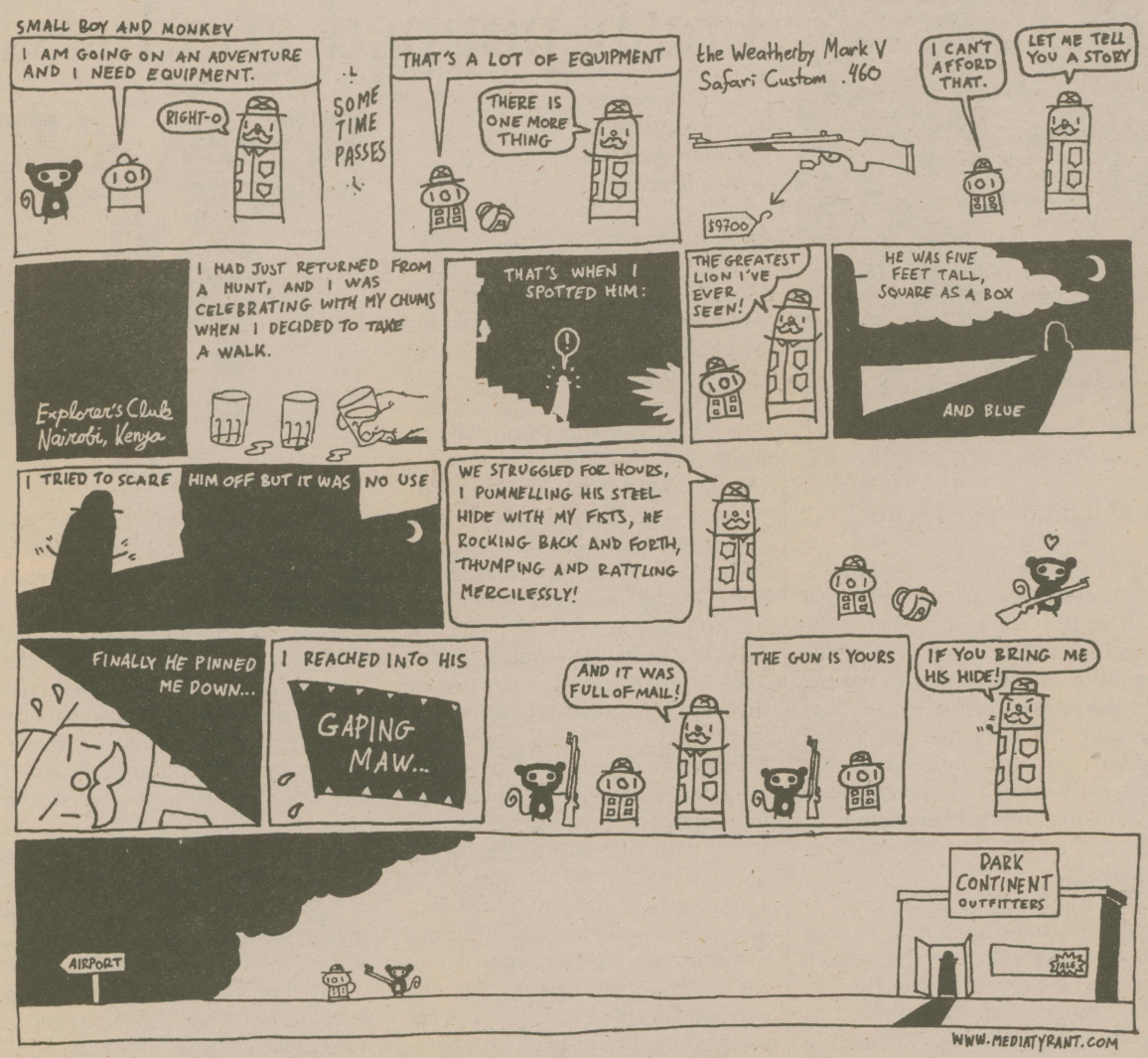
SMALL BOY AND MONKEY
I AM GOING ON AN ADVENTURE AND I NEED EQUIPMENT.
RIGHT-O
SOME TIME PASSES
THAT'S A LOT OF EQUIPMENT
THERE IS ONE MORE THING
the Weatherby Mark V Safari Custom .460
$9700
I CAN'T AFFORD THAT.
LET ME TELL YOU A STORY
I HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A HUNT, AND I WAS CELEBRATING WITH MY CHUMS WHEN I DECIDED TO TAKE A WALK.
Explorer's Club Nairobi, Kenya
THAT'S WHEN I SPOTTED HIM:
THE GREATEST LION I'VE EVER SEEN!
HE WAS FIVE FEET TALL, SQUARE AS A BOX
AND BLUE
I TRIED TO SCARE HIM OFF BUT IT WAS NO USE
WE STRUGGLED FOR HOURS, I PUMMELLING HIS STEEL HIDE WITH MY FISTS, HE ROCKING BACK AND FORTH, THUMPING AND RATTLING MERCILESSLY!
FINALLY HE PINNED ME DOWN...
I REACHED INTO HIS GAPING MAW...
AND IT WAS FULL OF MAIL!
THE GUN IS YOURS
IF YOU BRING ME HIS HIDE!
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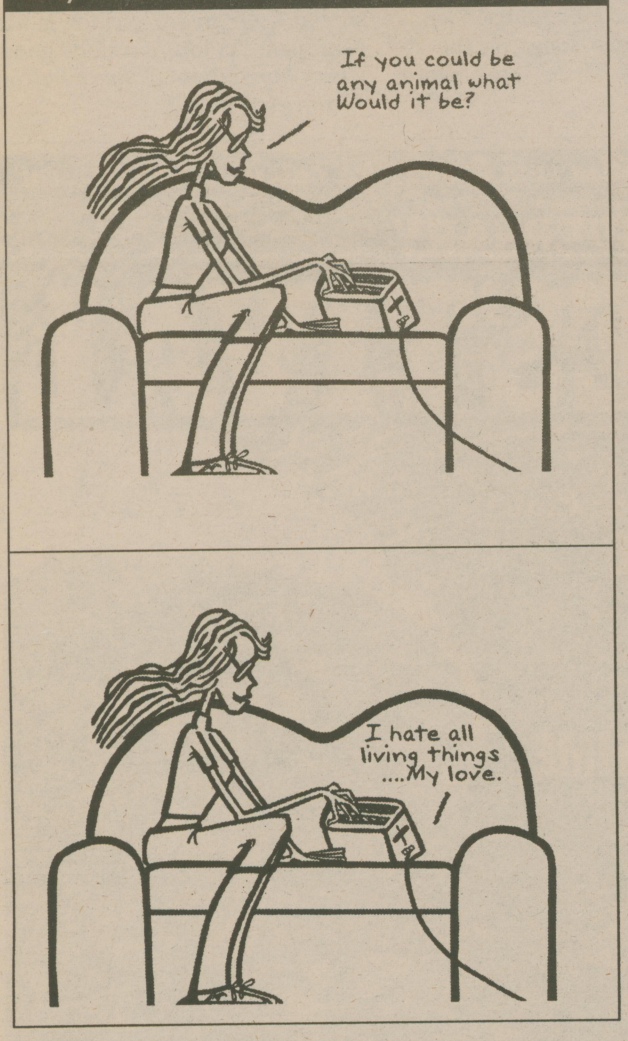
SAM & FUZZY
©2004 BY SAM LOGAN.
HEY, SAM! GUESS WHAT I'M DOING?
OH NO, NOT THIS TIME. I'M NOT GETTING BURNED BY ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR HORRIFIC SCHEMES.
SALE $14.95
BUT THIS ONE HAS A PUPPY! THAT CAN'T BE BAD, RIGHT?
WRONG. YOU ALWAYS TRY TO MISLEAD ME FIRST. BUT THEN I FIND OUT THAT YOU'RE GOING TO EAT THE PUPPY, OR THAT THE PUPPY IS RABID...
I'M NOT BITING. GIVE UP.
SAM, IT'S JUST A NORMAL PUPPY, AND I'M NOT GOING TO HARM A HAIR ON HIM. ALL I'M DOING IS TAKING SOME CUTE PUPPY PHOTOS.
REALLY? THAT... THAT DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE PHOTOS?
I THOUGHT I'D SEND THEM TO THE PUPPY'S OWNER ALONG WITH THE RANSOM LETTER.
DAMN IT!!!
NEW COMICS EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT: WWW.SAMANDFUZZY.COM

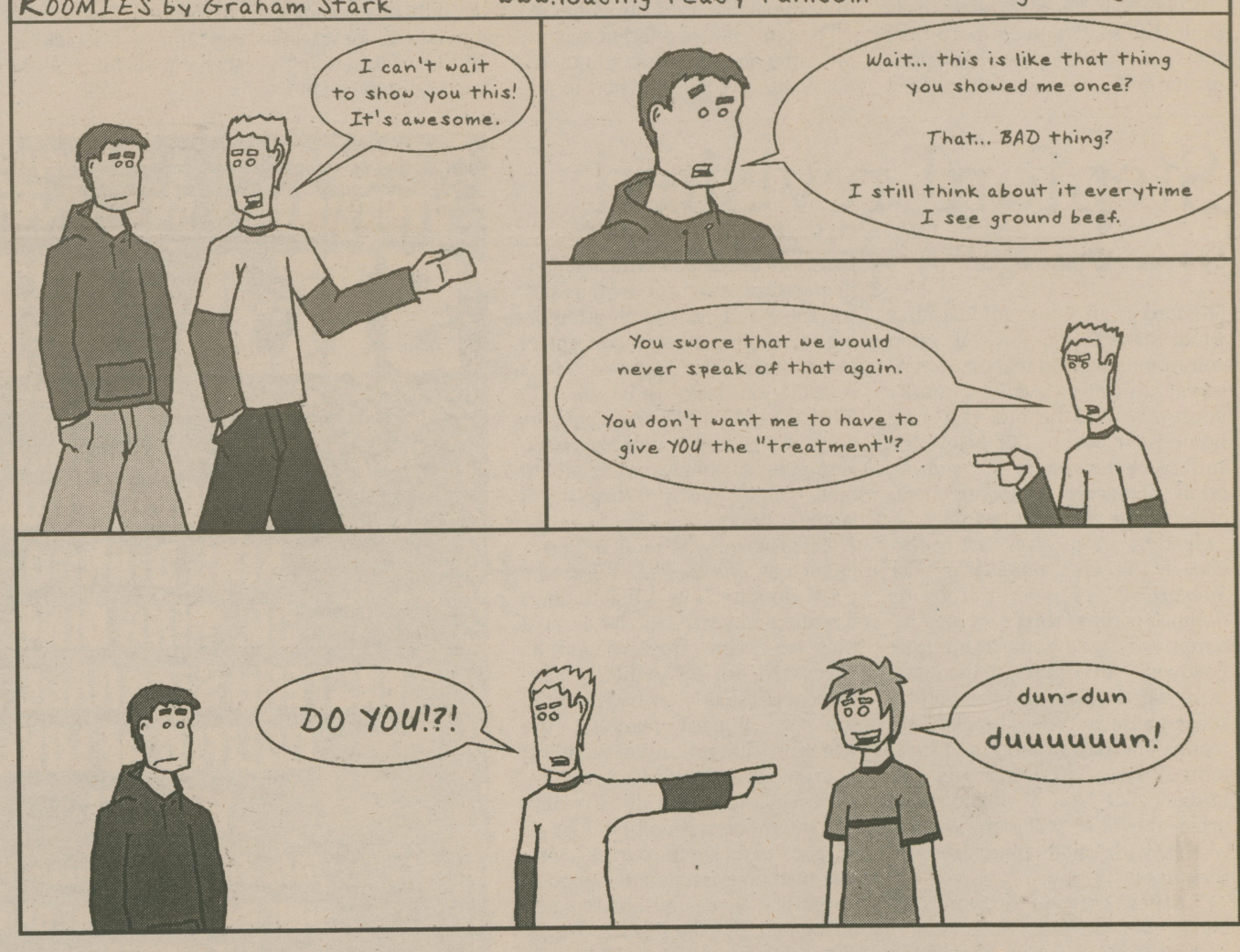
Lady & Toaster

by Norman Ed Baskerville



ROOMIES by Graham Stark

www.loading-ready-run.com gstark@uvic.ca


I can't wait to show you this! It's awesome.
Wait... this is like that thing you showed me once?
That... BAD thing?
I still think about it everytime I see ground beef.
You swore that we would never speak of that again.
You don't want me to have to give YOU the "treatment"?
DO YOU!?!
dun-dun duuuuuun!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WALK/RUN for Prostate Cancer
Father's Day, Sunday, June 20 2004, 9:00 a.m., Beaver Lake, Victoria, B.C. Ph: 388-0214 or www.theprostatecentre.info for more information.

On Sunday, June 20 the City of Victoria presents a free family celebration of Celtic music and dance at the Cameron Brandshell in Beacon Hill Park at 1:30 p.m.. Entertainment includes: the fiddling of Daniel Lapp and friends, the O'Brien Irish Dance School, and the Celtic Folk Group Kitangus.
For more information call: (250) 361-0358.

All Candidates Forum on Canadian Peace and Security. Do you want to ask your candidate about defence spending, the war on terrorism or the missle defence program? come to the All Candidates Forum on Canadian Peace and Security June 21, 7 p.m. in the Michèle Pujol Room, at UVic's Student Union Bldg. For more information call 472-4558.

S&M Productions presents the Canadian Premiere of a Great new comedy drama "Rounding Third" starring David McPherson & Howie Siegal. The Belfry Theatre July 2 to July 24 . Call the Belfry Arts Centre Box Office for more information: 385- 6835.

The Victoria cat rescue Corps. is holding their annual **Strawberry Tea and Sale** Saturday June 19, 2004 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at St. Matthias Church 600 Richmond Ave.
Come and support our Spay/Neuter fund.
For more information call: 656-1100.

VENUS RISING!
The Greater Vancouver Island Sculpters Guild will have an exhibit and sale of sculpture created from a variety of materials to capture man's whimsical, emotional and imaginative relationship with the sea at The Maritime Museum of BC, Bastion Square, Victoria. Show runs from June 25 - October 17, 2004. Hours are daily from: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call (250)642-6065.

HEY YOU

Get well Georgina, we love you.

President Bush, let's see how tough you are without your tanks bitch—You and me in the ring, you choose the venue. OpEd.

Sometimes I'm distant. Sometimes I'm abrupt. Sometimes I put pickled herring in your beer. For all of this, I sincerely apologize and hope you can find it within yourself to forgive me. If not, that's you decision, but I warn you to carefully examine the entire contents of all your beverages for the next while.